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TITLE: AIDS Among Asians and Pacific Islanders in the United States

AUTHORS: Wortley, PM; Metler, R; Hu, DJ; Fleming, PL

OBJECTIVE: To characterize Asians and Pacific Islanders (A/PI) reported with AIDS in the United States.

METHODS: AIDS surveillance data reported through June 1998 were analyzed. Characteristics of cumulative cases, rates of AIDS incidence in 1996-97, and trends from 1982 to 1996 were analyzed.

RESULTS: Through June 1998, 4741 A/PI adults and 47 children with AIDS were reported in the United States. Eighty-nine percent were among men, and of those 78% of male cases were among men who have sex with men (MSM). Seventy-eight percent of cases were reported from five states that account for 63% of the A/PI population in the United States: California (45%), Hawaii (12%), New York (15%), Texas (3%) and Washington (3%). Among 92% of A/PI with information on country of birth, 61% were foreign-born, corresponding to the distribution in the general population. The overall incidence rate per 100,000 for 1996-97 was 12.8 (21.3 for men and 3.3 for women); the highest rate was in the Northeast (15.9) followed by the West (13.8), South (10.6), and Midwest (5.7). Tuberculosis was reported for 6% of A/PI, and was higher among foreign born than U.S.-born A/PI (8% and 4%, respectively). Between 1982 and 1996, AIDS incidence among MSM increased, peaking in 1994. Among injection drug users and heterosexual contacts, incidence has increased but remained low.

CONCLUSIONS: The AIDS epidemic among A/PI in the United States has primarily affected MSM and is concentrated in a few states reflecting the distribution of the A/PI population. Prevention activities should include consideration of A/PI cultural diversity and understanding of cultural norms regarding sexuality. Additional information on risk behaviors and seroprevalence among A/PI MSM is needed to better guide prevention planning.

PRESENTER CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: Pascale M. Wortley

Address: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
1600 Clifton Road, NE, Mailstop E-47
Atlanta, GA 30333

Telephone: (404) 639-4497

Fax: (404) 639-2980

E-mail: pmw1@cdc.gov